DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 486 CE 002 254

AUTHOR Grabowski, Stanley M.
TITLE Innovation Dissemination in Adult Education.
PUB DATE Jul 74
NOTE 19p.; Keynote address given at the HEW Region II Seminar on Innovation Dissemination (New Brunswick, New Jersey, July 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *Information Dissemination; Speeches

ABSTRACT

While recognizing the constraints of time and money, there is a distinct need for faster and greater dissemination of research results, especially for innovations in adult education. A study of typical dissemination methods, including project publications, conversation presentations, workshops, commercial publications, and inservice teacher training, has shown they have merits as well as limitations. Educational products, like seeds planted to take root, grow, and bear fruit, should be disseminated so they might be adopted by practitioners and, through their use, bring about change in the learners. Better interagency linkages, one-stop information centers, and using educational extension agents are ideas to consider in approaching new ways to the dissemination/adoption of innovations in adult education. (NH)

ED 097486

AUG 02 1974

"INNOVATION DISSEMINATION IN ADULT EDUCATION"

STANLEY M. GRABOWSKI

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

HEW REGION II

SEMINAR ON INNOVATION DISSEMINATION

JULY 15-18 1974

RUTGERS THE STATE UNIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CE003259

ROBERT BLAKELY HAS STATED, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, THAT IF WE COULD EVERYWHERE USE WHAT WE PRESENTLY KNOW, THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION WOULD BE REVOLUTIONIZED! BLAKELY WAS REFERRING TO THE VAST AMOUNT OF USABLE RESEARCH AS WELL AS BEST PRACTICES.

ANYONE WHO HAS TAKEN THE TIME AND EFFORT TO LOOK AT RESEARCH FINDINGS KNOWS WHAT A WEALTH OF INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN ADULT EDUCATION.

BLAKELY DID NOT MEAN, AND I DO NOT MEAN TO SAY THAT MOST OF THE PROBLEMS PRACTITIONERS IN ADULT EDUCATION FACE CAN BE SOLVED THROUGH RECOURSE TO ALREADY COMPLETED RESEARCH. THERE IS STILL MUCH RESEARCH NEEDED IN ADULT EDUCATION IMMEDIATELY, AND THE NEED WILL CONTINUE INDEFINITELY.

BLAKELY WAS ECHOING THE COMPLAINT ABOUT THE TIME-LAG BEFORE INNOVATION REACHES WIDE ACCEPTANCE. THE AVERAGE TIME-LAG IS ABOUT 25 YEARS IN EDUCATION, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THAT WAY. ONE EXAMPLE OF A RELATIVELY QUICK ACCEPTANCE OF AN INNOVATION IN EDUCATION WAS THE NEW MATH WHICH REQUIRED ONLY 5-YEARS TO BE ACCEPTED WIDELY IN THIS COUNTRY'S SCHOOLS.

THE TRANSLATION OF RESEARCH INTO IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE HAS NOT OCCURRED IN ANY AREA OF EDUCATION, AS NOTED BY GUBA, NOT MERELY ADULT EDUCATION. BUT THAT IS LITTLE COMFORT FOR THE ADULT EDUCATOR.

THE PROBLEM OF DISSEMINATION IN ADULT EDUCATION IS VERY COMPLEX. IT IS MORE PROPERLY A WHOLE SERIES OF PROBLEMS.

ONE HAPPY NOTE MUST ACCOMPANY THE PROBLEMS OF DISSEMINATION. THERE IS NOW A STEADY FLOW OF HIGH QUALITY ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH STUDIES IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS. THERE WAS A TIME, NOT TOO LONG AGO, WHEN RESEARCH IN ADULT EDUCATION WAS THIN BOTH IN QUANTITY AS WELL AS QUALITY.

STILL, THERE ARE MANY RESEARCH STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION, JUST AS IN OTHER FIELDS, THAT ARE QUESTIONABLE OR USELESS. SUCH STUDIES DESERVE NOT TO BE DISSEMINATED.

AT ONE TIME, WHEN A LONE RESEARCHER HEROICALLY PURSUED HIS STUDY WITHOUT ANY OUTSIDE SUPPORT, HE DID NOT HAVE A BUILT-IN SOURCE OF DISSEMINATION AS MANY RESEARCHERS HAVE TODAY THROUGH THE MECHANISM OF REPORTS WRITTEN TO COMPLY WITH CONTRACTS AND GRANTS FROM FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL AGENCIES AS WELL AS PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS. THE RESEARCHER USED TO RELY PRINCIPALLY ON JOURNALS AND CONFERENCES AS MEANS FOR BROADCASTING HIS FINDINGS.

BUT EVEN TODAY, THE RESEARCHER WORKING UNDER A CONTRACT

OR A GRANT HAS NO ASSURANCE THAT HIS FINDINGS WILL BE DISSEMINATED. WE ALL KNOW HOW SOME BUREAUCRATIC FILES ARE BULGING WITH RESEARCH REPORTS WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN DISSEMINATED FOR WHATEVER REASONS.

IN SOME CASES THERE IS NO COMPULSION ON THE PART OF THE GRANTOR TO DISSEMINATE INNOVATIONS UNIVERSALLY. THE MILITARY IS AN AREA WHERE, BY FAR, THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF MONEY IS SPENT FOR ADULT EDUCATION. EACH YEAR THE PENTAGON SPENDS BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON ADULT EDUCATION, MUCH OF IT ON RESEARCH. WHILE SOME OF THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN THE MILITARY MAY BE CLASSIFIED, MUCH OF IT IS NOT. BUT THERE IS NOT MUCH EFFORT MADE TO INTRODUCE THE INNOVATIONS IN OTHER AREAS OF ADULT EDUCATION.

WHAT IS DISSEMINATED

FOR THE MOST PART, PROJECT REPORTS ARE DISSEMINATED BY THE PROJECT DIRECTOR AND/OR BY THE GRANTOR. ALL SUCH REPORTS, WHEN GIVEN CLEARANCE, ARE INPUT INTO THE ERIC SYSTEM AND RECEIVE A CERTAIN KIND OF DISSEMINATION. THROUGH ERIC AN ABSTRACT OF THE REPORT APPEARS IN RESEARCH IN EDUCATION, WITH HARDCOPY AND MICRO-FICHE REPRODUCTIONS FOR SALE ON A STANDING ORDER BASIS OR ON DEMAND.

OCCASIONALLY, SOME OTHER PRODUCT, SUCH AS A FILM, AUDIOTAPE, SLIDES, OR A COMBINATION OF THESE MEDIA RESULTS FROM A PROJECT AND IS DISSEMINATED BY THE GRANTOR, OR BY THE PROJECT DIRECTOR, OR THROUGH AN ARRANGEMENT WITH A COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTOR.

WHAT IS DISSEMINATED MAY BE WHAT THE PRACTITIONER NEEDS AND WANTS, BUT MORE LIKELY IT IS NOT.

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN ONE OF THE CARTOONS SPOOFING THE NON-RELEVANCE OF WHAT IS DELIVERED TO THE USER AND WHAT WAS PROPOSED BY THE GRANTOR.

ONE VERSION OF THE CARTOON IS IN SIX SEGMENTS WHERE THE FIRST DEPICTS THE DESIGN AS PROPOSED BY THE PROJECT SPONSOR, SHOWING A SWING WITH THREE SEATS, ONE ABOVE THE OTHER SUSPENDED BY TWO ROPES FROM A TREE BRANCH.

THE SECOND SEGMENT IS THE DESIGN AS SPECIFIED IN THE PROJECT REQUEST SHOWING A SWING WITH ONE SEAT SUSPENDED BY THREE ROPES FROM A TREE BRANCH -- ONE ROPE AT THE ENDS AND A THIRD RUNNING THROUGH THE CENTER OF THE SEAT.

THE THIRD SEGMENT IS THE SWING AS DESIGNED BY THE SENIOR ANALYST AND SHOWS THE TWO ROPES OF A SWING TIED AROUND THE TRUNK WITH THE SINGLE SEAT RESTING ON THE GROUND.

THE FOURTH SEGMENT IS THE SWING AS PRODUCED BY THE PROGRAMMERS, AND HERE THE SINGLE SEAT SWING IS SUSPENDED BY TWO ROPES, EACH FROM A BRANCH ON EITHER SIDE OF THE TREE TRUNK.

THE FIFTH SEGMENT IS THE SWING AS INSTALLED AT THE USERS SITE. IT SHOWS BASICALLY THE SAME DESIGN AS THE PROGRAMMERS' BUT HERE THE TWO BRANCHES TO WHICH THE ROPES ARE TIED ARE EACH SUPPORTED BY A GROUND POST SO THAT THE TREE TRUNK COULD BE CUT AWAY FROM THE GROUND TO A POINT ABOVE THE SWING SEAT.

THE LAST SEGMENT IS WHAT THE USER WANTED AND SHOWS AN AUTO-MOBILE TIRE SUSPENDED BY A SINGLE ROPE FROM A TREE BRANCH.

THE CARTOON IS OBVIOUSLY AN EXAGGERATION AND A DISTORTION, BUT THERE IS A GRAIN OF TRUTH TO IT. SOME PROJECT RESULTS ARE RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS OF THE PRACTITIONER ONLY IN A GLOBAL SENSE, WHILE OTHERS ARE AIMED AT SUCH DISCRETE AUDIENCES AND THEIR SPECIFIC LOCAL NEEDS THAT THE PROJECT RESULTS ARE NOT UNIVERSALIZABLE.

IN THIS CONNECTION WE SHOULD EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF THE PROPOSITION THAT GRANTORS DEMAND DISSEMINATION AS A COMPONENT OF EVERY PROJECT THEY FUND. I WONDER HOW REALISTIC IS THIS WELL-MEANT SUGGESTION? IT IS ASKING FOR THE NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPECT A RESEARCHER TO CONDUCT A STUDY IN ORDER TO ADD TO OUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE, TO DEVELOP THAT NEW KNOWLEDGE INTO SOME USABLE FORM, TO EVALUATE THE SO-CALLED PRODUCT, AND TO DISSEMINATE IT?

HOW MANY INSTITUTIONS ARE COMPETENT IN ALL THOSE AREAS OF EXPERTISE? HOW MANY ARE WILLING TO FARM OUT SOME OF THE PIECES OF THE PROJECT, EVEN IF IT WERE EASY FOR THEM TO DO SO?

IN ADDITION, HOW REALISTIC IS IT TO EXPECT ADEQUATE DISSEMINATION OF A PRODUCT UNDER THE CURRENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF FUNDING GRANTS AND CONTRACTS? THE TIME AND MONEY CONSTRAINTS ALMOST PRECLUDE ANY EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION.

HOW ARE PRODUCTS DISSEMINATED

MOST PROJECT PRODUCTS ARE DISSEMINATED IN ANY ONE OR SEVERAL OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS: BY WORD OF MOUTH; AT CONFERENCES,

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOP REPORTS AS WELL AS DEMONSTRATIONS; THROUGH STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS; AND THROUGH THE LITERATURE SUCH AS PERIODICALS, PROJECT REPORTS, ERIC, NTIS, AND COMMERCIAL PUBLISHERS.

DARKENWALD AND BEDER AT THE CENTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, COMPLETED A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS OF DISSEMINATION AND USE OF INNOVATIONS IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, WHICH IS NOW IN PRESS. THEY LOOKED AT THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE TYPES OF DISSEMINATION USED IN ABE. HERE IS WHAT THEY REPORTED:

PROJECT PUBLICATIONS CAN REACH LARGE NUMBERS OF POTENTIAL USERS, BUT THEY ARE EXPENSIVE IF WELL-DESIGNED, AND NEED EXPERTISE IN PLANNING, PRINTING AND MAILING. IN ADDITION, THEY ARE LIMITED INSOFAR AS THEY CREATE AWARENESS, WHICH IS NOT ENOUGH. OFTEN THEY MUST GIVE DETAILED INFORMATION SUCH AS DATA OUTCOMES, USE AND BENEFITS.

CONVERSATION PRESENTATIONS CAN REACH LARGE AUDIENCES AT A SMALL EXPENSE, ALLOW POTENTIAL USERS TO ASK QUESTIONS, AND TO INSPECT THE PRODUCTS. HOWEVER, SUCH PRESENTATIONS TEND TO STIMULATE INTEREST NOT USE OF THE PRODUCTS. IT IS ALSO EXPENSIVE FOR INDIVIDUALS TO TRAVEL TO CONVENTIONS OTHER THAN LOCAL ONES.

WORKSHOPS ALLOW FOR A FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT TO CONVEY DIFFICULT IDEAS, BUT REACH RELATIVELY FEW PEOPLE AT QUITE AN EXPENSE.

COMMERCIAL PUBLICATION HELPS DISSEMINATE A SALEABLE PRODUCT BECAUSE THE DEALER MUST SELL A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER TO REALIZE A PROFIT. COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS BOUND BY COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS AND PRECLUDES FREE DISTRIBUTION. ALSO, ONLY HARD PRODUCTS SUCH AS CURRICULUM MATERIALS, RESEARCH REPORTS, AND TRAINING MANUALS ARE AMENABLE TO COMMERCIAL PROMOTION.

TEACHER TRAINING IS EFFECTIVE ON A STATE AND REGIONAL IN-SERVICE BASIS WHERE IT CAN USE EXISTING CHANNELS, ALLOWS FOR FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT, CAN TRANSMIT IDEAS AS WELL AS HARD PRODUCTS, AND HAS A BUILT-IN POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUITY THROUGH STATE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES.

THAT'S THE WAY IT IS. THE QUESTION NOW IS: IS THAT THE WAY IT OUGHT TO BE? TO ANSWER THE QUESTION WE MUST FIRST LOOK AT THE IDEA OF DISSEMINATION AND WORK FROM THAT.

ETYMOLOGICALLY, DISSEMINATION IS ROOTED IN THE WORD SEMEN -- SEED. TO DISSEMINATE MEANS TO SPREAD SEEDS, TO PLANT WIDELY. APPLYING THE WORD DISSEMINATION TO EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS WE CAN SAY IT MEANS COMMUNICATING PRODUCTS TO POTENTIAL USERS. PRODUCTS MEANING PROGRAMS, PROCESSES, AND PRODUCTS SUCH AS BOOKS AND AV MATERIALS.

IN THE CASE OF PLANTED SEEDS WE EXPECT TO SEE THEM TAKE ROOT, GROW, AND BEAR FRUIT. SIMILARLY, WITH EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS,

WE DISSEMINATE PRODUCTS SO THAT THEY MIGHT BE ADOPTED BY THE PRACTITIONERS AND THROUGH THEIR USE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN THE LEARNERS.

EXPLAINED IN THIS WAY, DISSEMINATION AND ADOPTION SOUND LIKE SIMPLE IDEAS, AND THEY ARE. BUT THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IS FAR FROM SIMPLE.

GUBA LOOKED AT THE PROCESS OF TRANSLATING RESEARCH FOR DELIVERY TO THE USER AND CAME UP WITH A MODEL WHICH GOES LIKE THIS:

> THERE MUST BE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INNOVATIVE THINKING OR PRACTICE INTO USABLE, PRACTICAL FORM, THE DESIGN OF THE PRODUCT MUST MEET THREE CRITERIA: HOW WELL DOES IT PERFORM? IS IT FLEXIBLE, THAT IS, IS IT ABLE TO BE ADOPTED? AND, IS IT GENERALIZABLE? ONLY IF IT MEETS THESE CRITERIA, IS A PRODUCT FEASIBLE AND VIABLE, THAT IS, IT WILL WORK AND SURVIVE.
>
> ONCE THE PRODUCT IS DESIGNED, IT MUST BE DIFFUSED -- THAT IS, THE PRACTITIONER MUST BE INFORMED OF THE PRODUCT THROUGH DISSEMINATION AND DEMONSTRATION IN ORDER THAT THE PRACTITIONER WILL ADOPT THE PRODUCT.

ACCEPTING THIS MODEL, OR ANY OTHER MODEL OF THIS KIND, POSES NO PROBLEM FOR MOST ADULT EDUCATORS. THE PROBLEMS ARISE WHEN ADULT EDUCATORS TRY TO IMPLEMENT SUCH A MODEL. THE PROBLEMS ARE ALL ALONG THE PROCESS, NOT JUST AT ONE POINT.

HERE ARE THE KINDS OF PROBLEMS MANY INVESTIGATORS HAVE DISCOVERED:

COMMUNICABILITY, TRIALABILITY, DIVISIBILITY AND MODIFIABILITY OF THE PRODUCT; COST OF ADOPTION; RISK IN ADOPTION; MOTIVATION AND ABILITY TO DISSEMINATE; PROBLEMS OF CONTINUITY; AND EVALUATION.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE PROBLEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATING INNOVATION IN A SOCIAL SYSTEM OVER TIME, YOU BEGIN TO APPRECIATE THE DIMENSIONS OF THE DISSEMINATION TASK.

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS WE CAN LOOK AT THESE AND SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN DISSEMINATION. GUBA, HAVELOCK, HUTCHINS, ROGERS AND SHOEMAKER -- AMONG OTHERS -- HAVE OUTLINED MODELS AND APPROACHES TO DISSEMINATION AND ADOPTION. MOST OF THESE MODELS FOLLOW A SIMILAR BASIC PATTERN. BORROWING FROM ALL OF THEM, I HAVE WORKED UP A STAGE PROCESS OF DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION.

I BEGAN WITH THE PRESUMPTION THAT THERE IS A PRODUCT READY FOR DISSEMINATION: A PRODUCT DESIGNED ACCORDING TO GUBA'S CRITERIA. THEN USING PRINCIPLES OF MARKETTING, I HAVE GIVEN EXAMPLES OF THE WAY MANUFACTURERS APPLY THE PRINCIPLES IN THEIR SALES PROMOTION CAMPAIGNS OF NEW PRODUCTS.

THE FIRST STAGE IN DISSEMINATION IS AWARENESS. THE POTENTIAL USER MUST KNOW THAT THE PRODUCT EXISTS: THAT IT IS AVAILABLE, WHAT IT DOES, AND HOW IT WORKS.

MANUFACTURERS USE ANY ONE OR A COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS TO INFORM POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS THAT THEY HAVE A NEW PRODUCT:

DIRECT MAIL
MEDIA ADVERTISING: TV, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES
DOOR TO DOOR SALES
RETAIL STORES
HOME DEMONSTRATIONS
BILL BOARDS

IN DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING, MANUFACTURERS USE ANNOUNCEMENT AND EXPLANATION BROCHURES: BROCHURES PLUS AN ACTUAL SAMPLE OR A STORE COUPON FOR A FREE SAMPLE, OR A DISCOUNT CERTIFICATE.

MEDIA ADVERTISERS SHOW AND TELL WHAT THE PRODUCT IS AND WHAT IT CAN DO.

DOOR TO DOOR SALESPEOPLE NOT ONLY TELL YOU ABOUT THEIR PRODUCT BUT OFTEN DEMONSTRATE IT. THE KIRBY CARPET VACUUM CLEANER SALESPERSON SHOWS YOU HOW TO USE ONE OF THE MACHINES AND LETS YOU TRY IT.

THE HOME DEMONSTRATION SALESPERSON GOES TO A HOME TO SHOW THE PRODUCTS AND SELL THEM, SUCH AS THE TUPPERWARE HOME DEMONSTRATIONS. THE DEMONSTRATION INCLUDES FREE SAMPLES AND PRIZES FOR PARTICIPANTS.

AFTER AWARENESS OF THE PRODUCT THE NEXT STAGE IN DISSEMINATION IS TO SHOW THE POTENTIAL USER THAT THE PRODUCT MEETS HIS/HER NEEDS.

COMMERCIAL MANUFACTURERS DO NOT PRESUME THAT THE POTENTIAL USERS HAVE A NEED FOR THE PRODUCT, OR IF THEY HAVE A NEED, THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF IT. ADVERTISERS, IN EFFECT, SHOW OR TELL THE CONSUMER "YOU NEED THIS PRODUCT." HOW SUCCESSFUL THE ADVERTISERS ARE IN SELLING PRODUCTS THAT PEOPLE DO NOT NEED, DO NOT WANT, CAN'T AFFORD, AND OFTEN CAN'T USE, IS SEEN REGULARLY AS NEW PRODUCTS ARE FOISTED ON US.

RECOGNIZING AND ALLOWING FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND PREFERENCES, MANUFACTURERS PACKAGE THEIR PRODUCTS IN VARIOUS WAYS TO MEET THE REAL AND IMAGINED NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY PACKAGE PRODUCTS SUCH AS TOOTHPASTE IN SEVERAL SIZES -- SMALL, REGULAR, ECONONY, GIANT AND FAMILY SIZES. RADIOS AND TELEVISION SETS COME IN MANY SIZES, SHAPES, AND MODELS TO FIT OUR BUDGET, SPACE, AND DECOR REQUIREMENTS.

AWARENESS AND NEED FOR A PRODUCT ARE FOLLOWED BY SHOWING THE CUSTOMER THE ADVANTAGES OF USING THIS PRODUCT, THIS BRAND. MANUFACTURERS TRY TO CONVINCE THE CUSTOMER THAT THEIR NEW PRODUCT IS DIFFERENT AND, THEREFORE, BETTER THAN THE OLD PRODUCT OR THAT OF COMPETITORS. THEY DO THIS BY POINTING OUT DIFFERENCES IN THE PRODUCTS. ADVERTISERS KNOW THAT WE CHOOSE AND SELECT ON THE BASIS OF DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN SAMENESS. WE BUY ONE BRAND OF COFFEE INSTEAD OF ANOTHER BECAUSE IT TASTES DIFFERENT, OR COSTS LESS, THAN OTHER BRANDS OF COFFEE; WE DRIVE A CERTAIN MAKE OF CAR AND MODEL NOT BECAUSE IT IS A MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION LIKE ALL OTHER CARS, BUT BECAUSE IT HAS SOME SPECIAL FEATURE NOT FOUND IN

OTHER CARS.

A FOURTH STAGE IN DISSEMINATION IS TO GIVE THE POTENTIAL USER EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRODUCT. MANUFACTURERS GIVE AWAY FREE TRIAL SAMPLES, DISCOUNT COUPONS, OR AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE A MACHINE. OFTEN THEY GIVE THE CUSTOMER A CHANCE TO USE THE PRODUCT WITH AS LITTLE COST OR RISK AS POSSIBLE.

THEY KNOW THAT WHEN THEY ASK CUSTOMERS TO SWITCH TO THEIR NEW PRODUCT, THEY ARE ASKING CUSTOMERS TO CHANGE HABITS. AND ALL OF US KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO GET ANYONE OUT OF A RUT; RUTS ARE COMFORTABLE EVEN IF THEY MAY BE IMPRACTICAL, INEFFICIENT OR EVEN HARMFUL.

A FIFTH STAGE, WHICH LASTS AS LONG AS THE PRODUCT IS MARKETTED, IS THE FOLLOW-UP OR REINFORCEMENT OF THE INITIAL PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEW PRODUCT. MANUFACTURERS REALIZE THAT JUST BECAUSE THEY TOLD CUSTOMERS ABOUT THE PRODUCT ONCE, OR EXPLAINED IT ONCE, OR EVEN DEMONSTRATED IT ONCE, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE CUSTOMERS WILL REMEMBER IT, OR UNDERSTAND IT, OR WILL USE IT. SO IN THEIR ADVERTISING THEY REPEAT THE NEW PRODUCT OVER AND OVER AGAIN. THEY MIGHT VARY OR EVEN CHANGE THE COMMERCIAL OR ADVERTISEMENT REGULARLY, BUT THE REPETITION GOES ON AND ON. IN THAT WAY THEY GIVE MAINTENANCE SUPPORT TO THE PRODUCT.

THE LAST STAGE OF DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION IS EVALUATION. MANUFACTURERS HAVE A SIMPLE MEASURING YARDSTICK -- THE MARGIN OF PROFIT. IF THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MARKETTING A NEW PRODUCT, THERE WILL COME A TIME WHEN THEY WILL RECOVER ALL THEIR COSTS OF DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, AND PROMOTION, AND MAKE MONEY.

THIS SIX PROCESS STAGE OF DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION OF A NEW PRODUCT -- AWARENESS, NEEDS SATISFACTION, SEEING ADVANTAGES, EXPERIENCING, REINFORCEMENT, AND EVALUATION -- CAN BE SEEN IN A NEW PRODUCT INTRODUCED TO THE PUBLIC A FEW MONTHS AGO. A NEW CHILDREN'S TOOTHPASTE -- AIM -- WAS MARKETTED.

WE WERE FIRST MADE AWARE OF AIM WHEN WE RECEIVED A FREE SAMPLE TOGETHER WITH A LEAFLET IN THE MAIL.

THE LEAFLET POINTED OUT THE BENEFITS OF USING AIM: AIM IS A GEL, DISSOLVES QUICKER SO THAT ITS PLEASANT TASTE WILL PROMPT CHILDREN TO BRUSH LONGER AND, THEREFORE, BRUSH THOROUGHLY; AIM CONTAINS JUST THE PRECISE AMOUNT OF FLOURIDE; AND AIM CONTAINS NO ABRASIVES.

THERE WAS A TUBE OF AIM BEGGING TO BE TESTED AND TRIED. TO REINFORCE ITS USE BEYOND THE SAMPLE, A COUPON WAS ENCLOSED FOR A COLORING BOOK AND SET OF MAGIC MARKER PENS FOR SENDING THREE AIM LABELS.

THE FOLLOWING DAY THE LOCAL TELEVISION STATIONS WERE CARRYING AIM COMMERCIALS. WITHIN A WEEK I NOTICED THE MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY TRUCKS RUMBLING THROUGH THE CITY WITH THE ENTIRE

TRUCK SURFACE ANNOUNCING AIM. AT SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT COUNTERS I SAW DISPLAYS OF AIM CONTAINING VARIOUS SIGNS OF AIM.

THE MANUFACTURER HAD PROVIDED FOR THE FIRST FIVE PROCESS STAGES OF DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION OF AIM. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO EVALUATE THE PROMOTIONAL EFFECT, BUT YOU CAN BE SURE THAT IT WILL FOLLOW.

THE ANALOGY BETWEEN DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION OF NEW PRODUCTS OF MANUFACTURERS AND EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS IS NOT PERFECT. THERE ARE SOME REAL DIFFERENCES WHICH MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR ADULT EDUCATORS TO HAVE THE SAME DEGREE OF SUCCESS AS MANUFACTURERS. TRADITIONS, MONEY, AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS ARE THE THREE BIGGEST FACTORS THAT COME TO MIND IMMEDIATELY. BUT THESE FACTORS ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE BARRIERS: THEY ARE HURDLES -- FORMIDABLE AND CHALLENGING -- BUT ONLY HURDLES WHICH CAN BE NEGOTIATED.

WHAT CAN WE DO

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS WE MIGHT CONSIDER IN APPROACHING NEW WAYS TO DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION OF INNOVATIONS IN ADULT EDUCATION.

I SEE THE PROMOTION OF MORE AND BETTER INTER-AGENCY LINKAGES AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FIRST MEASURE. THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION, RICH IN ITS WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS, SUFFERS FROM A FRACTURING OF EFFORTS BY NUMEROUS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND AGENCIES. THE FIELD DESPERATELY NEEDS A MARSHALLING OF RESOURCES -- BOTH HUMAN AND FINANCIAL -- TO MEET THE EXISTING EXEGENCIES AND TO

PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE NEXT DECADE.

WHATEVER HAPPENS IN EXECUTIVE SUITES AT CONVENTIONS AMONG ELECTED AND APPOINTED LEADERS, THE NEED WILL STILL BE THERE FOR INTER-AGENCY LINKAGES AT ALL LEVELS.

CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH INTER-AGENCY LINKAGES IS THE CONCEPT OF ONE-STOP INFORMATION CENTERS. ONCE THERE IS A POOLING AND SHARING OF RESOURCES AND INFORMATION, THEN A MECHANISM FOR FOCUSING THE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION IN A READILY ACCESSIBLE PLACE IS NEEDED.

ONE-STOP INFORMATION CENTERS WOULD BE LINKED UP WITH COMMUNICATION NETWORKS SUCH AS ERIC TO PROVIDE AN INFORMATION BASE WHICH IS CONSTANTLY UPDATED. SOME PEOPLE THINK OF ERIC CLEARINGHOUSES AS BEING ONE-STOP INFORMATION CENTERS. ERIC CLEARINGHOUSES ARE MISNOMERS; THEY ARE NOT CLEARINGHOUSES, ALTHOUGH THEY TRY HARD TO PROVIDE USER SERVICES WITHIN THEIR VERY RESTRICTIVE GUIDELINES AND LIMITED RESOURCES.

THE KIND OF ONE-STOP INFORMATION CENTERS I HAVE IN MIND WOULD START WITH AN INFORMATION BASE, THEN GO ON FROM THERE. THEY WOULD ALSO GIVE EQUAL EMPHASIS TO PEOPLE RESOURCES - KEEPING INVENTORIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR COMPETENCIES AS REFERENCES TO BE CONTACTED.

ANOTHER FUNCTION OF THE ONE-STOP INFORMATION CENTER WOULD BE A SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF A BODY OF INFORMATION. THIS

FUNCTION WOULD CALL FOR A TWO-STEP PROCESS, WITH TWO KINDS OF EXPERTISE. ONE WOULD BE THE SYNTHESIS OF A BODY OF RESEARCH -- A SORT OF LITERATURE REVIEWING STATE OF THE ART -- WHERE A SCHOLAR(S) WOULD PULL TOGETHER EVERYTHING RELEVANT TO A TOPIC UP TO THE MINUTE AND MAKE SENSE OUT OF IT.

THE NEXT STEP WOULD NEED A TRANSLATOR-TYPE OF PERSON WHO IS FAMILIAR AND CONVERSANT WITH BOTH THE RESEARCH LANGUAGE AND THE LANGUAGE AND NEEDS OF THE PRACTITIONER.

NEITHER STEP IS EASY. BESIDES THERE ARE VERY, VERY FEW INDIVIDUALS IN ADULT EDUCATION WHO HAVE THESE SPECIALIZED COMPETENCIES. TO COMPOUND THE PROBLEM, SOME OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE REQUIRED EXPERTISE ARE NOT ANXIOUS TO DO IT FOR ANY OF SEVERAL REASONS INCLUDING NO BROWNIE POINTS TOWARDS THEIR PROMOTION IN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY; THE GREAT DEMAND OF TIME NEEDED TO DO A GOOD JOB; AND THE ABSENCE OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVE.

ANOTHER ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION PROCESS IN ADULT EDUCATION IS THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL EXTENSION AGENTS. THESE AGENTS WOULD WORK ALONG THE LINES OF EXTENSION AGENTS IN AGRICULTURE. THEY WOULD PERFORM THE DEMONSTRATION FUNCTION OF DIFFUSION MIXING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OLD-FASHIONED EVANGELISM -- FERVENT TESTIMONIALS FROM TRUSTWORTHY AND BELIEVABLE SOURCES -- WITH DETAILED AND SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE APPLIED TO THE NEEDS OF THE PRACTITIONER.

ONE LAST OBSERVATION ABOUT RELATING TO THE NEEDS OF PRACTITIONERS. EARLIER, IN SPEAKING ABOUT THE MARKETTING PROCESS I PRESUMED THE EXISTENCE AND AVAILABILITY OF AN USABLE PRODUCT. THE QUESTION THEN ARISES, IS THIS WHAT THE PRACTITIONER WANTS AND NEEDS? AND THE ONLY VALID ANSWER IS AN AXIOM FROM LAW WHICH SAYS THAT "PRESUMPTION YIELDS TO TRUTH."

WE MUST NOT TAKE CHANCES WITH PRESUMPTIONS. WE CAN AND MUST BE CERTAIN THAT WE USE THE SEVERELY LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO US -- MOST EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY. WE KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT NEEDS ASSESSMENTS TO ZERO IN ON THE NEEDS OF PRACTITIONERS IN A SCIENTIFIC WAY. SOME OF THESE HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE AND ARE A GOOD STARTING POINT.

IN SUGGESTING NEEDS ASSESSMENT I AM AWARE THAT INNOVATIONS CAN LEAD TO NEEDS JUST AS NEEDS CAN LEAD TO INNOVATIONS. AT THE MOMENT, RESEARCH DOES NOT PROVIDE A CLEAR ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER AWARENESS OF A NEED, OR AWARENESS OF AN INNOVATION (THAT CREATES A NEED) COMES FIRST.

THESE ANIMADVERSIONS ARE MEANT TO BE STARTERS AND PRODDERS OF FURTHER DISCUSSION DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS AS ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THIS ASSEMBLY OF ADULT EDUCATORS FOCUSES ON THESE PROBLEMS.

I HOPE THAT THE RESULT OF THIS CONFERENCE IS NOT A SERIES OF "SOMEONE SHOULDS" OR, WORSE, A STRING OF ACCUSATIONS FOR

FAILURES. IN THIS CONNECTION I REFER TO AN OLD EXPRESSION THAT IS AS TELLING AS IT IS ACCUSATIVE. IT GOES THIS WAY: "NEVER POINT A FINGER OF ACCUSATION AT OTHERS,BECAUSE THERE ARE THREE FINGERS POINTING BACK AT YOURSELF."

IT IS INCUMBENT UPON ALL OF US, INDIVIDUALLY AND CORPORATELY, TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHALLENGE TO GIVE SPECIFIC DIRECTION TO DISSEMINATION/ADOPTION IN ADULT EDUCATION.

I DO NOT HAVE A BRILLIANT OR CLEVER CONCLUSION TO THIS PRESENTATION. I CAN'T EVEN ADOPT THE WITTY REMARK CHURCHILL COULD MAKE AFTER THE BATTLE OF DUNKIRK WHEN HE SAID, "THIS IS NOT THE BEGINNING OF THE END; IT IS ONLY THE END OF THE BEGINNING." I DID NOT WANT TO END UP SAYING "THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING OF OUR EFFORTS AT DISSEMINATION OF INNOVATION IN ADULT EDUCATION."

INSTEAD I WILL SIMPLY SAY, "THIS IS THE END OF MY TALK, BUT IT IS THE BEGINNING OF YOUR DELIBERATIONS. MAY YOUR DELIBERATIONS RESULT IN ACTIONS THAT WILL MAKE THIS TALK OBSOLESCENT."